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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

LUZ ZENDEJAS,

Plaintiff,

vs.

THE OLD PLACE, INC.; OLD
CORNELL LLC; and DOES 1 to 10,
Defendants.

Case No.:

COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE
RELIEF AND DAMAGES FOR DENIAL
OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF A DISABLED
PERSON IN VIOLATIONS OF

1. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES
ACT, 42 U.S.C. §12131 et seq.;

2. CALIFORNIA'S UNRUH CIVIL
RIGHTS ACT;

3. CALIFORNIA'S DISABLED
PERSONS ACT;

4. CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY
CODE;

5. NEGLIGENCE

Plaintiff LUZ ZENDEJAS ("Plaintiff") complains of Defendants THE OLD
PLACE, INC.; OLD CORNELL LLC; and DOES 1 to 10 ("Defendants") and alleges as
follows:

PARTIES

1. Plaintiff is a California resident with a physical disability. Plaintiff is
diagnosed with multiple sclerosis which resulted in nerve damage and is substantially

1 limited in her ability to walk. Plaintiff requires the use of a wheelchair at all times when
2 traveling in public.

3 2. Defendants are, or were at the time of the incident, the real property owners,
4 business operators, lessors and/or lessees of the real property for a restaurant
5 (“Business”) located at or about 29983 Mulholland Hwy., Agoura Hills, California.

6 3. The true names and capacities, whether individual, corporate, associate or
7 otherwise of Defendant DOES 1 through 10, and each of them, are unknown to Plaintiff,
8 who therefore sues said Defendants by such fictitious names. Plaintiff will ask leave of
9 Court to amend this Complaint when the true names and capacities have been
10 ascertained. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and, based thereon, alleges that each such
11 fictitiously named Defendants are responsible in some manner, and therefore, liable to
12 Plaintiff for the acts herein alleged.

13 4. Plaintiff is informed and believes, and thereon alleges that, at all relevant
14 times, each of the Defendants was the agent, employee, or alter-ego of each of the other
15 Defendants, and/or was acting in concert with each of the other Defendants, and in doing
16 the things alleged herein was acting with the knowledge and consent of the other
17 Defendants and within the course and scope of such agency or employment relationship.

18 5. Whenever and wherever reference is made in this Complaint to any act or
19 failure to act by a defendant or Defendants, such allegations and references shall also be
20 deemed to mean the acts and failures to act of each Defendant acting individually, jointly
21 and severally.

22 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

23 6. The Court has jurisdiction of this action pursuant to 28 USC §§ 1331 and
24 1343 for violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, (42 USC §12101, *et*
25 *seq.*).

26 7. Pursuant to pendant jurisdiction, attendant and related causes of action,
27 arising from the same nucleus of operating facts, are also brought under California law,
28

1 including, but not limited to, violations of California Civil Code §§51, 51.5, 52(a), 52.1,
2 54, 54., 54.3 and 55.

3 8. Plaintiff's claims are authorized by 28 USC §§ 2201 and 2202.

4 9. Venue is proper in this court pursuant to 28 USC §1391(b). The real
5 property which is the subject of this action is located in this district, Los Angeles County,
6 California, and that all actions complained of herein take place in this district.

7 **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

8 10. In or about April of 2024, Plaintiff went to the Business.

9 11. The Business is a restaurant business establishment, open to the public, and
10 is a place of public accommodation that affects commerce through its operation.
11 Defendants provide parking spaces for customers.

12 12. While attempting to enter the Business during each visit, Plaintiff personally
13 encountered a number of barriers that interfered with her ability to use and enjoy the
14 goods, services, privileges, and accommodations offered at the Business.

15 13. To the extent of Plaintiff's personal knowledge, the barriers at the Business
16 included, but were not limited to, the following:

- 17 a. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
18 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
19 failed to post required signage such as, "Minimum Fine \$250" and
20 "Unauthorized Parking."
21 b. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for
22 the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants
23 failed to provide proper van accessible space designated for the
24 persons with disabilities as the access aisle failed to meet the
25 minimum width requirements.
26 c. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for
27 persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state
28 standards. Defendants failed to maintain the mark on the space with

the International Symbol of Accessibility, resulting in the paint becoming severely deteriorated, hindering visibility.

- d. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state standards. Defendants failed to maintain the blue borderlines, blue hatched lines, and “NO PARKING” markings painted on the ground as required, resulting in the markings becoming severely deteriorated, hindering visibility.
- e. Defendants failed to maintain the parking space designated for persons with disabilities to comply with the federal and state standards. Defendants failed to maintain the facility to be readily accessible, as there were numerous potted plants obstructing use of the van accessible aisle.
- f. Defendants failed to comply with the federal and state standards for the parking space designated for persons with disabilities. Defendants failed to provide at least one accessible entrance as required, as there were stairs instead of a compliant ramp.
- g. Defendants failed to provide a compliant sales and service counter. The height of the counter was higher than the height allowed by the Standards.
- h. Defendants failed to provide a compliant sales and service counter. Defendants failed to provide clear ground space positioned for a forward approach to the counter as there were stairs obstructing the area in front of the counter.

14. These barriers and conditions denied Plaintiff full and equal access to the Business and caused Plaintiff difficulty and frustration. Plaintiff wishes to return and patronize the Business; however, Plaintiff is deterred from visiting the Business because

1 her knowledge of these violations prevents her from returning until the barriers are
2 removed.

3 15. Based on the violations, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that
4 there are additional barriers to accessibility at the Business after further site inspection.
5 Plaintiff seeks to have all barriers related to her disability remedied. *See Doran v. 7-
6 Eleven, Inc.* 524 F.3d 1034 (9th Cir. 2008).

7 16. In addition, Plaintiff alleges, on information and belief, that Defendants
8 knew that particular barriers render the Business inaccessible, violate state and federal
9 law, and interfere with access for the physically disabled.

10 17. At all relevant times, Defendants had and still have control and dominion
11 over the conditions at this location and had and still have the financial resources to
12 remove these barriers without much difficulty or expenses to make the Business
13 accessible to the physically disabled in compliance with ADDAG and Title 24
14 regulations. Defendants have not removed such barriers and have not modified the
15 Business to conform to accessibility regulations.

16 **FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION**

17 **VIOLATION OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990**

18 18. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
19 paragraphs in this complaint.

20 19. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (“ADA”), no individual
21 shall be discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of
22 the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations of any place of
23 public accommodation by any person who owns, leases, or leases to, or operates a place
24 of public accommodation. *See* 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a).

25 20. Discrimination, *inter alia*, includes:

- 26 a. A failure to make reasonable modification in policies, practices, or
27 procedures, when such modifications are necessary to afford such
28 goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations

1 to individuals with disabilities, unless the entity can demonstrate that
2 making such modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of
3 such goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or
4 accommodations. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(ii).

5 b. A failure to take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that no
6 individual with a disability is excluded, denied services, segregated or
7 otherwise treated differently than other individuals because of the
8 absence of auxiliary aids and services, unless the entity can
9 demonstrate that taking such steps would fundamentally alter the
10 nature of the good, service, facility, privilege, advantage, or
11 accommodation being offered or would result in an undue burden. 42
12 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iii).

13 c. A failure to remove architectural barriers, and communication barriers
14 that are structural in nature, in existing facilities, and transportation
15 barriers in existing vehicles and rail passenger cars used by an
16 establishment for transporting individuals (not including barriers that
17 can only be removed through the retrofitting of vehicles or rail
18 passenger cars by the installation of a hydraulic or other lift), where
19 such removal is readily achievable. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(b)(2)(A)(iv).

20 d. A failure to make alterations in such a manner that, to the maximum
21 extent feasible, the altered portions of the facility are readily
22 accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including
23 individuals who use wheelchairs or to ensure that, to the maximum
24 extent feasible, the path of travel to the altered area and the
25 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered
26 area, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with
27 disabilities where such alterations to the path or travel or the
28 bathrooms, telephones, and drinking fountains serving the altered area

are not disproportionate to the overall alterations in terms of cost and scope. 42 U.S.C. § 12183(a)(2).

21. Where parking spaces are provided, accessible parking spaces shall be provided. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5); 2010 ADA Standards § 208. One in every eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 in (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated “van accessible.” 1991 ADA Standards § 4.1.2(5)(b). For every six or fraction of six parking spaces, at least one shall be a van accessible parking space. 2010 ADA Standards § 208.2.4.

22. Under the ADA, the method and color of marking are to be addressed by State or local laws or regulations. See 36 C.F.R., Part 1191. Under the California Building Code (“CBC”), the parking space identification signs shall include the International Symbol of Accessibility. Parking identification signs shall be reflectorized with a minimum area of 70 square inches. Additional language or an additional sign below the International Symbol of Accessibility shall state “Minimum Fine \$250.” A parking space identification sign shall be permanently posted immediately adjacent and visible from each parking space, shall be located with its centerline a maximum of 12 inches from the centerline of the parking space and may be posted on a wall at the interior end of the parking space. See CBC § 11B-502.6, et seq.

23. Moreover, an additional sign shall be posted either in a conspicuous place at each entrance to an off-street parking facility or immediately adjacent to on-site accessible parking and visible from each parking space. The additional sign shall not be less than 17 inches wide by 22 inches high. The additional sign shall clearly state in letters with a minimum height of 1 inch the following: “Unauthorized vehicles parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying distinguishing placards or special license plates issued for persons with disabilities will be towed away at the owner’s expense...” See CBC § 11B-502.8, et seq.

24. Here, Defendants failed to provide the sign stating, “Minimum Fine \$250”. Additionally, Defendants failed to provide the sign with the specific language stating

1 “Unauthorized vehicles parked in designated accessible spaces not displaying
2 distinguishing placards or special license plates issued for persons with disabilities will
3 be towed away at the owner’s expense...”

4 25. For the parking spaces, access aisles shall be marked with a blue painted
5 borderline around their perimeter. The area within the blue borderlines shall be marked
6 with hatched lines a maximum of 36 inches (914 mm) on center in a color contrasting
7 with that of the aisle surface, preferably blue or white. The words "NO PARKING" shall
8 be painted on the surface within each access aisle in white letters a minimum of 12 inches
9 (305 mm) in height and located to be visible from the adjacent vehicular way. CBC §
10 11B-502.3.3.

11 26. Here, Defendants failed to provide a proper access aisle as the “NO
12 PARKING” markings, blue borderlines, and blue hatched lines painted on the parking
13 surface were poorly maintained, resulting in the markings becoming severely
14 deteriorated, hindering visibility. Additionally, Defendants failed to provide the access
15 aisle with the minimum width of 96 inches.

16 27. The surface of each accessible car and van space shall have surface
17 identification complying with either of the following options: The outline of a profile
18 view of a wheelchair with occupant in white on a blue background a minimum 36” wide
19 by 36” high (914 mm x 914 mm). The centerline of the profile view shall be a maximum
20 of 6 inches (152 mm) from the centerline of the parking space, its sides parallel to the
21 length of the parking space and its lower side or corner aligned with the end of the
22 parking space length or by outlining or painting the parking space in blue and outlining
23 on the ground in white or a suitable contrasting color a profile view of a wheel chair with
24 occupant. See CBC § 11B-502.6.4, et seq.

25 28. Here, Defendants failed to maintain the International Symbol of
26 Accessibility painted on the surface as required, resulting in the markings becoming
27 severely deteriorated, hindering visibility.
28

1 29. At least one accessible route shall connect accessible building, facilities,
2 elements, and spaces that are on the same site. 1991 ADA Standards § 4.3.2. A public
3 accommodation shall maintain in operable working condition those features of facilities
4 and equipment that are required to be readily accessible to and usable by persons with
5 disabilities by the Act or this part. 28 C.F.R. 35.211(a).

6 30. Here, Defendants failed to provide at least one accessible entrance to the
7 Business as each entrance had stairs instead of a proper ramp. Additionally, Defendants
8 failed to maintain the facility as readily accessible as there were numerous potted plants
9 within the boundaries of the van accessible aisle, obstructing use.

10 31. Sales counters and service counters shall comply with 904.4.1 or 904.4.2.
11 The accessible portion of the countertop shall extend the same depth as the sales or
12 service counter top. 2010 ADA Standards § 904.4. Forward Approach. A portion of the
13 counter surface that is 30 inches (760 mm) long minimum and 36 inches (915 mm) high
14 maximum shall be provided. Knee and toe space complying with 306 shall be provided
15 under the counter. A clear floor or ground space complying with 305 shall be positioned
16 for a forward approach to the counter. 2010 ADA Standards § 904.4.2.

17 32. Here, Defendants failed to provide a sales and service counter below the
18 maximum height of 36 inches allowed by the Standards. Further, Defendants failed to
19 provide clear ground space positioned for a forward approach to the counter as there were
20 stairs obstructing the area in front of the counter.

21 33. A public accommodation shall maintain in operable working condition those
22 features of facilities and equipment that are required to be readily accessible to and usable
23 by persons with disabilities by the Act or this part. 28 C.F.R. 35.211(a).

24 34. By failing to maintain the facility to be readily accessible and usable by
25 Plaintiff, Defendants are in violation of Plaintiff's rights under the ADA and its related
26 regulations.

27 35. The Business has denied and continues to deny full and equal access to
28 Plaintiff and to other people with disabilities. Plaintiff has been and will continue to be

discriminated against due to the lack of accessible facilities, and therefore, seeks injunctive relief to alter facilities to make such facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities.

SECOND CAUSE OF ACTION

VIOLATION OF THE UNRUH CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

36. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

37. California Civil Code § 51 states, “All persons within the jurisdiction of this state are free and equal, and no matter what their sex, race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sexual orientation, citizenship, primary language, or immigration status are entitled to the full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services in all business establishments of every kind whatsoever.”

38. California Civil Code § 52 states, “Whoever denies, aids or incites a denial, or make any discrimination or distinction contrary to Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6, is liable for each and every offense for the actual damages, and any amount that may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damage but in no case less than four thousand dollars (\$4,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights provided in Section 51, 51.5, or 51.6.

39. California Civil Code § 51(f) specifies, “a violation of the right of any individual under federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) shall also constitute a violation of this section.”

40. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial of full and equal accommodation, advantages, facilities, privileges, or services by physically disabled persons within the meaning of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52. Defendants have discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code §§ 51 and 52.

1 41. The violations of the Unruh Civil Rights Act caused Plaintiff to experience
2 difficulty, discomfort, or embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for statutory
3 damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

4 **THIRD CAUSE OF ACTION**

5 **VIOLATION OF CALIFORNIA DISABLED PERSONS ACT**

6 42. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
7 paragraphs in this complaint.

8 43. California Civil Code § 54.1(a) states, “Individuals with disabilities shall be
9 entitled to full and equal access, as other members of the general public, to
10 accommodations, advantages, facilities, medical facilities, including hospitals, clinics,
11 and physicians’ offices, and privileges of all common carriers, airplanes, motor vehicles,
12 railroad trains, motorbuses, streetcars, boats, or any other public conveyances or modes
13 of transportation (whether private, public, franchised, licensed, contracted, or otherwise
14 provided), telephone facilities, adoption agencies, private schools, hotels, loading places,
15 places of public accommodations, amusement, or resort, and other places in which the
16 general public is invited, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by
17 law, or state or federal regulation, and applicable alike to all persons.

18 44. California Civil Code § 54.3(a) states, “Any person or persons, firm or
19 corporation who denies or interferes with admittance to or enjoyment of public facilities
20 as specified in Sections 54 and 54.1 or otherwise interferes with the rights of an
21 individual with a disability under Sections 54, 54.1 and 54.2 is liable for each offense for
22 the actual damages, and any amount as may be determined by a jury, or a court sitting
23 without a jury, up to a maximum of three times the amount of actual damages but in no
24 case less than one thousand dollars (\$1,000) and any attorney’s fees that may be
25 determined by the court in addition thereto, suffered by any person denied the rights
26 provided in Section 54, 54.1, and 54.2.

27 45. California Civil Code § 54(d) specifies, “a violation of the right of an
28 individual under Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-336) also

1 constitute a violation of this section, and nothing in this section shall be construed to limit
2 the access of any person in violation of that act.

3 46. The actions and omissions of Defendants alleged herein constitute a denial
4 of full and equal accommodation, advantages, and facilities by physically disabled
5 persons within the meaning of California Civil Code § 54. Defendants have
6 discriminated against Plaintiff in violation of California Civil Code § 54.

7 47. The violations of the California Disabled Persons Act caused Plaintiff to
8 experience difficulty, discomfort, and embarrassment. The Defendants are also liable for
9 statutory damages as specified in California Civil Code §55.56(a)-(c).

10 **FOURTH CAUSE OF ACTION**

11 **CALIFORNIA HEALTH & SAFETY CODE § 19955, et seq.**

12 48. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior
13 paragraphs in this complaint.

14 49. Plaintiff and other similar physically disabled persons who require the use of
15 a wheelchair are unable to use public facilities on a “full and equal” basis unless each
16 such facility is in compliance with the provisions of California Health & Safety Code §
17 19955 et seq. Plaintiff is a member of the public whose rights are protected by the
18 provisions of California Health & Safety Code § 19955 et seq.

19 50. The purpose of California Health & Safety Code § 1995 et seq. is to ensure
20 that public accommodations or facilities constructed in this state with private funds
21 adhere to the provisions of Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 4450) of Division 5 of
22 Title 1 of the Government Code. The code relating to such public accommodations also
23 require that “when sanitary facilities are made available for the public, clients, or
24 employees in these stations, centers, or buildings, they shall be made available for
25 persons with disabilities.

26 51. Title II of the ADA holds as a “general rule” that no individual shall be
27 discriminated against on the basis of disability in the full and equal enjoyment of goods
28 (or use), services, facilities, privileges, and accommodations offered by any person who

owns, operates, or leases a place of public accommodation. 42 U.S.C. § 12182(a). Further, each and every violation of the ADA also constitutes a separate and distinct violation of California Civil Code §§ 54(c) and 54.1(d), thus independently justifying an award of damages and injunctive relief pursuant to California law, including but not limited to Civil Code § 54.3 and Business and Professions Code § 17200, et seq.

FIFTH CAUSE OF ACTION

NEGLIGENCE

52. Plaintiff incorporates by reference each of the allegations in all prior paragraphs in this complaint.

53. Defendants have a general duty and a duty under the ADA, Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act to provide safe and accessible facilities to the Plaintiff.

54. Defendants breached their duty of care by violating the provisions of ADA, Unruh Civil Rights Act and California Disabled Persons Act.

55. As a direct and proximate result of Defendants' negligent conduct, Plaintiff has suffered damages.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully prays for relief and judgment against Defendants as follows:

1. For preliminary and permanent injunction directing Defendants to comply with the Americans with Disability Act and the Unruh Civil Rights Act;

2. Award of all appropriate damages, including but not limited to statutory damages, general damages and treble damages in amounts, according to proof;

3. Award of all reasonable restitution for Defendants' unfair competition practices;

4. Reasonable attorney's fees, litigation expenses, and costs of suit in this action;

5. Prejudgment interest pursuant to California Civil Code § 3291; and

1 6. Such other and further relief as the Court deems just and proper.

2 **DEMAND FOR TRIAL BY JURY**

3 Pursuant to Rule 38(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, Plaintiff hereby
4 demands a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

5
6 Dated: July 2, 2024

SO. CAL. EQUAL ACCESS GROUP

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9 By: /s/ Jason J. Kim
10 Jason J. Kim, Esq.
11 Attorneys for Plaintiff
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